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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR IO/RHS (PATEL), DRL/MLGA (SICADE), NEA/ARP
(HARRIS, BLONG), DRL/NESCA (HICKEY)

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDIS TO SUPPORT USG CANDIDACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL

REF: SECSTATE 31175

11. (SBU) Charge d'Affaires Rundell and A/DCM Muench delivered reftel demarche April 7 to Deputy Foreign Minister for Multilateral Relations Dr. Prince Turki bin Mohamed al-Kabeer. Prince Turki gave his immediate support for U.S. candidacy for the Human Rights Council. "Of course we'll support you," he said. "You've been gone too long."

12. (SBU) The English-language Arab News April 2 devoted front-page space to the news of the U.S. candidacy, with the headline: "US to join UN rights body that Bush administration shunned." That day's lead editorial (which does not necessarily represent government views) asserts that the U.S. would use a position on the Council to defend Israel against criticism. The writer adds: "Washington,s engagement with the UNHRC could mean it will seek to use the exercise in two years time to hobble its ability to condemn Israel for abuses. In so doing, it would also be limiting the council,s capacity to take a view on human rights abuses carried out by other states, including the United States itself."

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